

MARIAN JANE PORTER  
P.O. Box 8245  
Falls Church, VA 2204  
(202) 945-6625 (W)

10-21-99 2:04

October 19, 1999

Hon. Donna Shalala  
Secretary, Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C 20201

Dear Secretary Shalala:

The *Daily News* quotes you as saying "Although people have enthusiastically accepted new drugs made from biotechnology, some consumers have concerns about the use of this technology in foods. We need to ask why those concerns exist and how we can address them." The vast difference between drugs and foods should be quite obvious to any one. We all have a choice whether or not we take a drug and all the dangerous contraindications are clearly delineated in the *Physicians Desk Reference* for any consumer to look up. However, we do not have this same choice with our food. How are we to distinguish between corn that has been naturally grown and corn that has been genetically altered? It gets even more questionable when the corn is now in the form of corn syrup in our baby's food.

The refusal of the FDA to label genetically-engineered foods has long been a concern of many American consumers. This concern is growing significantly, as an increasing number Americans become outraged upon discovering that they were denied the right to choose the most wholesome foods for their families by the very agency set up to protect them! And this protest, as I'm sure you and Jane Henney of the FDA are aware, is getting more press coverage every day.

A lawsuit was filed in May of this year by The Alliance for Bio-Integrity, *et al.*, challenging the FDA's policy not to require labels on "transgenic" foods. On June 17, the First National Summit on the Hazards of Genetically-Altered Foods was held right here in Washington, D.C. Were you or any of your staff in attendance? Though little advertized, this meeting was well attended by consumers, scientists, consumer advocate groups, and representatives from the U.S. Congress, various religions, and the Press. At this meeting, the *first installment* of signatures (over 500,000) was presented to the White House, FDA, USDA, and the U.S. Congress from persons all over this country. At this writing, sponsored by the Mothers for Natural Law, a ***One Million Signature Campaign*** is well on its way to completion. I would like to point out that these signatures are *not* from Europe, Japan, the UK or any other country. These are American citizens protesting the gene-altering biotechnology and supporting the demands of the aforementioned lawsuit for safety testing and complete and ***prominent*** labels on *any* products considered "genetically-altered."

From your statement, one gets the impression that, thus far, Americans remain oblivious to the uproar going on in Europe and elsewhere. That is so far from an accurate presentation that I'm surprised the *Daily News* allowed it in print, thus misleading many of its investment-conscious subscribers.

Americans, like others in the world, have had enough pollution of their air, water and food, and are speaking out by protesting -- in greater and greater numbers every day. The number of signed protest petitions against this technology will surely end up being the largest ever gathered in this country. This is "Corporate America's Wake-Up Call." Americans have called a halt!

Sincerely,

  
MARIAN JANE PORTER

92N-0139

C6211